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Exploring Relationships Between Resume Fraud and Individual Differences

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Graduate Program in Psychology
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Science
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Exploring Relationships Between Resume Fraud and Individual Differences

By

Kateryna Synyak

Graduate Program in Industrial/Organizational Psychology

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Science

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies

The University of Western Ontario

London, Ontario, Canada

Abstract

Existing research on resume fraud highlights the commonality and consequences of resume misrepresentations, yet almost no research exists aiming to explain the occurrence of this intentional behaviour. The goal of this study was to explore the relationships between personality traits previously linked to deception (conscientiousness and honesty/humility), resume misrepresentations and acceptance of these misrepresentations. An online survey method of data collection was used during which participants constructed a resume and filled out various measures pertaining to individual difference and resume misrepresentation. The results of this study provide an initial understanding of the existing categories of resume misrepresentations and the extent to which participants misrepresent. Findings indicate interconnected relationships between acceptability of resume misrepresentations, actual resume misrepresentations, conscientiousness and honesty/humility. Potential implications of findings and study limitations are discussed.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to Dr. Joan Finegan, who was not only a wonderful supervisor but also an encouraging mentor during my time at Western University. Dr. Finegan's ongoing guidance and support from beginning to the very end of this project made this thesis possible. I appreciate all of Dr. Finegan's patience and encouragement as we spent what feels like countless hours putting together and editing each part of this thesis. I am very grateful that I was given a chance to choose a topic I am sincerely interested in. Since resume misrepresentations have not yet been extensively researched, I learned a lot not only about the topic itself but also about the research process in general.

I would also like to thank the members of my thesis advisory committee: Dr. Natalie Allen, Dr. Joshua Bourdage, Dr. Richard Goffin and Dr. Lyn Purdy. I am grateful that you shared your honest views and opinions relating to this project. Your feedback and advice has helped me improve my work and achieve this goal. In addition, I would like to thank Dr. Robert Gardner for sharing his statistical expertise with me and assisting me in choosing the best methods to analyze and report my data.

A special thank you to my mom, whose love, wisdom and courage has always inspired me to never give up and always stay positive while working towards my goals. Words cannot express how lucky and grateful I am to have you as a mother and friend. Thank you to my brother for all your help and support, no matter how busy you are you always make time to be there for me. And finally, thank you to all my friends for inciting me to work towards my goals and always believing in me.

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Individual Differences and Resume Misrepresentations

Industrial and organizational psychology explains and predicts human behaviour in the context of the workplace. Personnel selection is one of the major areas of this science. The goal of researchers in this area is often to predict the future success of an applicant. Making judgements about the potential performance of an applicant based only on the information provided on a resume and then comparing this individual to all other applicants is a difficult task. A greater challenge is introduced once deceptive behaviour is brought into the equation. Although many studies have been directed at predicting and detecting faking of bio-data and personality tests when selecting employees, almost no academic research studies have specifically addressed the issue of resume fraud to date (an exception to this: Guillory & Hancock, 2012). Yet, resume misrepresentation appears to be common (Koeppel, 2006). Media investigations and background checks by human-resource departments have found evidence to suggest that many resumes contain misrepresentations. In 2004, Reuters' News Agency reported that half of applications contained resume misrepresentations. In April 2006, a New York Times article reported that recruiters found that generally about half of applications contained inaccurate information (Koeppel, 2006). In 2007, ADP Screening and Selection Services reported that 41% of applications included misrepresented information (Levashina & Campion, 2006). Another study found that a staggering 90% of individuals admitted to lying on a resume-like scholarship application (George, Marrett & Tilley, 2004).

Resume fraud is viewed as a serious issue by organizations (Babcock, 2003; Tuna & Winstein, 2008). A study done by Haefner (2007) revealed that 43% of organizations reported an employee would be immediately dismissed if any type of resume fraud was detected, no matter the circumstances. Resume misrepresentations may lead to negative consequences for both the

organization and the applicant (Wood, Schmidtke, & Decker, 2007). Choosing an applicant who was untruthful on his or her resume could result in the company overlooking other applicants who were honest and potentially more qualified for the position (Engleman & Kleiner, 1998). If the deception is detected after an untruthful applicant has been hired, terminating the current unqualified employee, recruiting new applicants, then hiring and training them would entail considerable time and costs for the organization (Grover, 1993; Engleman & Kleiner, 1998). Conducting audits make it possible for organizations to verify information provided on applications. Even though background and reference checks are possible, misrepresentations may still occur (Burke, 2005). The little research that has been done on the topic has mostly been conducted by practitioners within organizations and mostly focusing on either the number of occurrences reported or the consequences of misrepresenting (Babcock, 2003). More research needs to be directed at understanding and explaining the faking behaviour (Griffith & Peterson, 2011).

The most relevant research relating to resume misrepresentations in I/O Psychology relates to applicant faking, which is defined by McFarland and Ryan (2000) as “intentional distortion on the part of the applicants” as an attempt to increase the chances of attaining a job position (p. 812). One of the issues pointed out by Griffith and Peterson is that researchers have failed to generate theory-based research which would be practical to organizations. Organizations would benefit from understanding “how” and “why” applicants misrepresent information, as opposed to knowing more about the consequences of it. Griffith and Peterson also state that to have a better understanding of why people fake it is essential to consider dispositional and situational factors. Therefore, following this advice, the central aim of my

study is to explore the relation between dispositional factors and tendency to intentionally provide inaccurate information on resumes.

I was interested in exploring why some individuals still choose to misrepresent information on their resume even though they are aware that it may be verified. To be more specific, I was interested in categorizing the types of intentional resume misrepresentations and investigating their relationship with individual differences. In particular I examined whether one's conscientiousness or honesty was related to the degree to which individuals exaggerated, invented or omitted information on their resume. In this online study, participants were asked to create a resume for a specific job posting, and then were questioned about whether or not they had intentionally misrepresented information. Respondents were also asked about how acceptable they thought it was to misrepresent themselves on their resume.

Misrepresentations in Applicant Selection

Applicants may misrepresent themselves in a variety of ways throughout the selection process. Some may misrepresent themselves because of a misunderstanding whereas others might intentionally misrepresent themselves. According to McFarland and Ryan (2000), individuals who intentionally distort application information such as biodata, integrity tests, personality tests and information, are able to do so because they understand what is expected and manipulate information to create the desired impression. A study conducted by Anderson, Warner and Spencer (1984) asked participants to rate the extent of their training and experience with real and fake job-related tasks. The real tasks were derived from a job analysis and the fake tasks were made up by the researchers to superficially resemble job-related tasks. The results of the study revealed that almost half of applicants claimed to have experience with tasks which

were not real, indicating that applicants deceitfully misrepresented information on their application. Results of studies focusing on applicant deception during interviews indicate that in general interviewers trust that applicants are honest when answering questions (Reinhard, Scharmach & Muller, 2013). Unfortunately, research has also shown that many interviewees misrepresent information when answering questions during an interview (Barrick & Mount, 1996; McFarland & Ryan, 2000; Reinhard et al., 2013).

According to diary studies, people admit to lying on average one to two times a day – showing that lying is common (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer & Epstein, 1996). Deception is a goal-directed act (Mitchell & Daniels, 2002) used to manipulate a target into believing something untrue, usually for the purpose of attaining some sort of reward (Kim, 2006). Applicants may be motivated to misrepresent information when there is a discrepancy between an ideal applicant (described in the job advertisement) and their current state, and this discrepancy could prevent them from receiving the desired reward – the job (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Furthermore, motivation to lie is stronger when people feel the need to present themselves positively (Jones & Pittman, 1982) as a way of impressing the evaluator (Kuhn, Johnson & Miller, 2013). According to DePaulo et al. (1996) the three main reasons which led individuals to lie are the desire to conform to other people's opinion of themselves, to attain some type of benefit or reward and to self-promote in an attempt to impress a particular audience. All these reasons could explain why someone would choose to misrepresent information on their resume, whether they are attempting to look as best as possible in the eyes of the evaluator or trying to fill the gap between their own qualifications and the required qualifications (Grover, 1993).

Paulhus believes that there are two types of deception: Self-Deceptive Enhancement and Impression Management. Self-Deceptive Enhancement refers to an individual unconsciously

providing an inflated self-report of themselves and misrepresenting unintentionally, whereas impression management refers to individuals who are consciously distorting the information they provide in order to create a desired impression (Griffith & Peterson, 2011; Hays & Dunnings, 1997; Paulhus, 1998). The focus of this study is on conscious deception, meaning that the deception was used with intent and on purpose.

DePaulo (1992) concluded that generally people are capable of, and are good at, faking behaviours during applicant screening. Impression management is defined as an individual's attempt to portray him or herself in a positive light in front of someone else (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). When applicants appropriately use impression management as a tactic during an interview, their chances of attaining the job are increased (Levashina & Campion, 2006). Although most often applicants will base their claims on the truth, both truth and lies can be effective at impressing the hiring manager assuming he or she believes the information is true (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). For this reason, impression management is of significant concern to both personnel-selection researchers and practitioners (Burns & Christiansen, 2006; Paulhus, 2003). Furthermore, some researchers directly refer to deceptive impression management as faking, and define it as “intentional distortion of responses on selection measures in order to create an overly positive impression that deviates from one's true standing on a trait” (Komar, Brown, Komar & Robie, 2008, p. 141). Therefore, while some applicants may use impression management to simply highlight their best side, others may maliciously do so to gain an unfair advantage over other applicants (Griffith & Peterson, 2011).

Since lying is a socially undesirable action, one potential concern for this study is whether people will admit to deception. In a study conducted by Weiss and Feldman (2006), participants were led to believe that they were undergoing a real job interview. They were asked

to fill out an application, and then to answer interview questions relating to their traits and qualifications for the position. The participants were then debriefed and told that they were actually participating in a research study. They were then asked to fill out the same application form again and answer questions about their honesty during the interview. The results of this study indicated that participants told an average of 1.75 lies in 10 minutes. The authors of this study suggested that this occurred because participants felt pressure to appear competent and some felt the need to be liked by the interviewer; these familiar pressures are likely to be experienced by a job applicant when writing a resume or undergoing an interview. In a study by Donovan, Dwight and Hurtz (2003) participants were directly asked to admit if they have been dishonest in their last job interview. When asked whether participants engaged in deceptive tasks during the selection process, 30% of participants admitted to applicant faking. However, when participants were asked more specific questions relating to misrepresentation, 50% admitted to exaggerating their own positive qualities (i.e. stating that they were more reliable or punctual than they were in reality) and about 60% of participants admitted to deemphasizing their negative qualities, such as a lack of interpersonal skills or not being conscientious. To increase the willingness of participants to admit to faking behaviours, this study used a randomized-response technique which assured the protection of anonymity among respondents. These results suggest that if participants are given anonymity, are aware that no actual job exists and knows there are no consequences for misrepresenting, then they are less likely to conceal their misrepresentations from the researcher.

Conceptualizing Misrepresentation

There are a few things we know about resume fraud. For example most embellishments are not extreme and are usually based on factual information (Wood et al., 2007). The two most

common misrepresentations on a resume are educational credentials and employment dates (Burke, 2005; Haefner, 2007; Winstein, 2008). Therefore, it is evident that different ways of misrepresenting information on a resume exist, but it is currently unclear how to categorize them.

Guillory and Hancock (2012) conducted a study to assess if there is a difference in the amount of resume misrepresentations on traditional offline resumes, private LinkedIn resumes and public LinkedIn resumes. They hypothesized that online resumes would contain the least amount of deception since they are most accessible to public verification. To do this, they classified the type of information on a resume into four categories: responsibility, abilities, involvement and interests. They found that although there were no differences in the amount of deception used, there were differences in the type of information that was most likely to be misrepresented, depending on the medium used. For example, there were fewer misrepresentations about previous work experience and responsibilities on the resumes posted on LinkedIn in comparison to traditional resumes, whereas information pertaining to interests and hobbies was more likely to be misrepresented on resumes posted on LinkedIn. These findings reveal the importance of categorizing the different types of information when focusing on resume misrepresentations.

To assess resume misrepresentations it was necessary to first conceptualize the different types of misrepresentations possible (Kaplan & Fisher, 2009). Currently, except for the understanding that resume fraud entails misrepresenting information on a resume, no clear typology of the different types of misrepresentation exists. One should keep in mind that for misrepresentation to occur, it is not necessary for false information to be delivered (Hopper and Bell, 1984). In other words, omitting relevant information may also create a factual distortion. In a similar vein, other researchers have argued that there are two different types of

misrepresentations: “omissive” in the case that information is withheld from the target and “active” in the case false information is given. The active misrepresentations can be either in the form of a lie or an exaggeration (Buller & Burgoon, 1994; Lee, 2004). Active and omissive acts may be used simultaneously or separately for deception to occur (Griffith & Peterson, 2011).

In 2007, Levashina and Campion constructed and validated a measure which assessed the extent to which participants admitted to misrepresenting information in a job interview. The aim of their study was to explore the deceptive methods used during the screening process. The study used a similar paradigm as Weiss and Feldman’s (2006) study in which participants thought that they were being interviewed for a real position and then afterwards were asked about the degree to which they had misrepresented themselves. Weiss and Feldman argued that interviewees may use slight image creation, extensive image creation, image protection and ingratiation when misrepresenting information. Slight image creation pertains to responses based on factual information, whereas extensive image creation pertains to information that is fictional. The results indicated that although over 90% of participants admitted to being deceptive during the application process, 85% misrepresented “slightly”, while 65% admitted to using extensive image creation at some point during the interview. In my study, in light of conclusions reached by Levashina and Campion, slight resume misrepresentations were assessed by items of exaggeration and extensive resume misrepresentations were assessed by items of invention.

Based on the findings mentioned above, this study focused on three types of misrepresentations: exaggerations, inventions and omissions. Furthermore, since it is possible that applicants distort resume information in other ways, aside from exaggerations, inventions and omissions, participants were also questioned about the accuracy of the information provided.

In my study, respondents were provided with a template of resume categories that are commonly used in constructing resumes (e.g., Education, work experience) and asked to provide the information they would include for each section if they were applying for a job. These sections are also closely related to the way Guillory and Hancock categorized information for their study. Respondents then rated the degree to which they exaggerated, invented or omitted material in each section

Hypothesis 1. Responses to the questions about three different types of misrepresentation should factor into three components representing exaggerations, inventions and omissions.

Acceptability of Misrepresentations

Based on social norms, individuals rate lying as generally unacceptable and hold negative attitudes towards lying (McLeod & Genereux, 2008). However, individuals rate some types of lies as more acceptable than others (McLeod & Genereux, 2008). Furthermore, individuals who find lying acceptable are more likely to lie themselves (Hopper & Bell 1984). An individual's perspective on the acceptability of deception will impact their decision to misrepresent when presented with an opportunity to deceive. If an applicant has the intention to misrepresent and feels it is acceptable to do so, then he or she is more likely to misrepresent, especially if they think the information will be assumed to be true. In this way, acceptability of deception in specific situations seems to be central to the decision of whether or not an applicant will choose to misrepresent (Hopper & Bell 1984).

Hypothesis 2. There will be a significant positive relationship between misrepresentations (exaggerations, inventions and omissions) and the degree to which respondents believe it is acceptable to misrepresent in this way.

Individual Differences and Faking

Research suggests that there are individual differences in the likelihood that applicants would misrepresent information (McFarland and Ryan, 2000). As outlined below, there is evidence to suggest that the personality traits of conscientiousness and honesty/humility are related to resume misrepresentation.

Honesty/Humility.

The Five Factor Model argues that there are five basic dimensions of personality: extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, openness to experience and agreeableness (Costa & McCrae, 1985; Goldberg, 1990). Recently, Ashton et al. (2004) have argued that honesty/humility should be added to the list. Honesty/humility refers to the extent an individual manipulates others for personal gain, feels temptation to break rules or feels entitled to social status. It predicts risk-taking behaviour and is negatively correlated with personality constructs such as entitlement, exploitation (Lee & Ashton, 2005) and Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970). Honesty/Humility has been found to be negatively correlated with counterproductive work behaviour (Lee & Ashton 2005; Lee, Ashton & Shin, 2005). One would expect that honest individuals are less likely to be deceptive and misrepresent information. A study conducted by McLeod and Genereux (2008) assessed personality differences and how they related to different types of lies. The researchers found that those who were less honest participated in more deceptive behaviours, no matter the type. Acceptability of lying behaviours has been shown to be closely related to how much individuals value honesty and in general how honest they are themselves (Lippard, 1988). Furthermore, those who value honesty were not only less likely to lie themselves but also less accepting of others lying, no matter the situation or type of lie.

Hypothesis 3. Honesty/humility will be negatively related to the degree to which responses are exaggerated, invented or omitted.

Hypothesis 4. Honesty humility will be negatively related to the degree to which exaggerations, inventions and omissions are thought to be acceptable

Conscientiousness.

An individual who is conscientious would be described as someone who is thorough, reliable, organized, cautious and attentive (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Conscientiousness has been shown to be the best single predictor of work performance and is therefore considered an important trait that employers should look for in applicants (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Individuals who are conscientious are less likely to lie than those who are low on conscientiousness, especially if the lies are more self-serving (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996), such as in a situation where one would misrepresent information on their resume. In 2000, McFarland and Ryan published a study which examined the relationship between dispositional characteristics and three different types of personnel assessments (biodata, personality measure, integrity measure). They found that conscientiousness was consistently and significantly negatively related to the amount of misrepresentation.

Hypothesis 5. Conscientiousness will be negatively related to the degree to which responses are exaggerated, invented or omitted.

Hypothesis 6. Conscientiousness will be negatively related to the degree to which exaggerations, inventions and omissions are thought to be acceptable.

Methods

Participants

Initially, 236 individuals took part in this online study. Thirty-six participants were removed from the study due to excessive missing data or careless responding. For the purpose of data analysis, 200 participants remained, 48% of whom were female. Although the study was open to participants residing in United States and Canada, all participants who successfully completed the study were residents of United States. The age of participants ranged from 18 to 68, average age being 31.7 (SD = 9.85) years old. All participants have had some type of post-secondary education, and 29 participants indicated that they were currently enrolled as a student at a college or university. In regards to employment, 73% of the sample were employed, 15.5% were self-employed, and 7.5% were not employed. (Of this later group nine listed themselves as homemakers, two as retired and 4 were unable to work)

Procedure

Individuals from Canada and the US were invited to participate in an online study using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). This website allows for participants who have an account with Amazon.com to complete “HITS”, known as Human Intelligence Tasks, in exchange for monetary compensation. To minimize careless responding, only participants who had completed at least 100 HITS and who had achieved an approval rate of 90% or more on previously completed MTurk tasks were able to see the posting advertising this study. Interested individuals who clicked on the “task” button were directed to a short summary of the study.

Interested individuals were then given details about the study and informed that their completion of this online survey implied their voluntary consent to participate (see the informed consent form in Appendix A)

Participants first completed the HEXACO measure (see Appendix B), and then were presented with a job advertisement for a Research Analyst (see Appendix C). They were asked to construct a resume for this job but were assured that this was not a real advertisement and there was no job.

Participants were asked to think of the job description and then to complete a job resume. To do this, they were presented with five categories typically found on resumes and asked to populate each with their own information. The job advertisement was displayed on every page in case the participant needed to refer to it. The five sections, in order, were: Education, Work Experience, Training and Development, License and Certificates, and About Yourself.

Once participants filled in the five sections, they were presented with all the information they had provided in previous sections and were given the opportunity to make changes. They were informed that this would be their last opportunity to change the constructed resume.

In the next part of the survey, participants were asked to rate the information they provided in each section of the resume in terms of the degree to which they had exaggerated, invented or omitted material. They were also asked to rate the information they provided in terms of accuracy. (An example of the questions can be found in Appendix D.) Each section was shown in order and filled out separately.

The participants were then presented with questions regarding how acceptable it was to misrepresent information on a resume (see Appendix E).

At the completion of the study, participants were directed to a debriefing letter (see Appendix F). Participants were compensated monetarily by the researcher through the MTurk money transfer system. Participants were compensated \$3.00 for successful completion after data was screened by the researcher to check for careless responding or missing data. All data entered was treated as anonymous and confidential. Responses collected are stored online and on the Western University network database, both protected by a secure password.

Measures

Personality assessment.

Personality was measured using the HEXACO Personality Inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Participants were asked whether they agree or disagree with 60 statements using a scale from 1 “Strongly disagree” to 5 “Strongly agree”. The scale is presented in Appendix B. Though respondents completed the entire scale, only the conscientiousness and honesty/humility scales were used in this study

Conscientiousness. Ten items were used to assess conscientiousness. A sample item is: “I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute”. The reliability of this scale is typically .76 and was .81 in this study. This measure has been found to correlate with other conscientiousness scales, such as the NEO-FFI (Lee & Ashton, 2009).

Honesty/Humility. Ten items were used to assess honesty/humility. A sample item is: “If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars”. The reliability of this scale is typically .74 and was .75 in this study.

Careless responding.

Also included with this scale were items to check for careless responding. Amidst the HEXACO-PI were three control items which instructed respondents to “select the neutral option”, “select the strongly agree option” and “select the disagree option”, respectively. Out of the total 36 respondents removed from analysis, 14 of them were removed because they selected a different option for one or more of these items, whereas the rest of the participants were removed because they did not complete all the scales.

Job desirability.

After being shown the job advertisement, respondents were asked to respond to three items that measured how desirable they found the job. The items are “I find this job very desirable”, “I would apply for this job if I were on the job market” and “I would very much like to get this job”. All items were rated on a 7-point scale with higher scores indicating greater desirability.

Resume Accuracy Measure.

Each of the five resume sections (education, work experience, training and development, license and certificates and about you) contained three misrepresentation items which asked the participant about the degree to which they exaggerated, invented or omitted information in that section. Specifically they were asked: Did you exaggerate any information you provided; did you omit any information; or did you invent any information. Each item was answered on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 “Not at all” to 7 “To a great extent”. In addition, respondents also rated their perception of the overall accuracy of each section of the resume using the same scale to answer the question “To what extent is the information you provided accurate?”

Respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on where they misrepresented and to explain why they did it. Specifically they were told, “If you provided any inaccurate information on your resume, could you provide specific examples and explain why you chose to do so?”. This data was not analyzed and instead kept for purposes of extended research.

Acceptability of resume misrepresentations.

For every type of misrepresentation (exaggeration, invention, omission), respondents were asked to indicate how acceptable that behaviour was on a scale from 1 “totally unacceptable” to 7 “perfectly acceptable”. Respondents did this for each resume section and for the overall resume. So in total 18 items (three items for each of the five sections of the resume and three for the overall resume) assessed how acceptable respondents thought it was to misrepresent information on resumes.

Analytical Techniques

Assumption testing and Principal Component Analysis.

A Principal Components Analysis (PCA) was used to determine the categorization of resume misrepresentations. Since PCA relies on a correlation matrix of the variables involved, it requires a substantial sample size for the correlations to stabilize. According to Comrey and Lee (1992) a sample of 200 participants is considered “fair”, whereas a 100 participants would be poor and 300 participants would be good. To avoid computational difficulties and to ensure an adequate sample size, they also suggest having at least 10 observations per variable. In the case of this study, there were 20 variables representing exaggeration, omission, invention and accuracy (four items across five resume sections) .This suggests our sample size was adequate.

PCA was used as a method of data reduction. PCA is a variable reduction technique which is used when variables are highly correlated and reduces the number of variables to a smaller number of components that account for majority of the variance of the observed variables. (To deal with missing data, missing variables were replaced with mean scores using SPSS.)

Correlational analysis.

To assess the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables, Pearson product-moment correlation was used.

Post-hoc and reliability analyses.

Independent t-tests were conducted to assess whether gender (male or female) or being a student (student versus non-student) influenced results. To see whether age affected results, I looked at correlations between age and components and items of misrepresentation. To assess whether employment status impacted on results, I grouped responses into three groups (employed, self-employed and unemployed/unpaid) and conducted an analysis of variance to determine if statistically significant differences were evident between employment status and misrepresentations. The variable means were then assessed using a t-test to analyze any significant differences. Cronbach's alpha was analyzed to assess the internal consistency among personality scales and composite variables of misrepresentations and acceptance of misrepresentations.

Results

Principal Components Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .895 indicating the data were sufficient for PCA, well above the minimum value of .6. To test the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix can be used as an identity matrix for the analysis, Bartlett's test of sphericity was examined. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant $\chi^2(190) = 4591.250, p = 0.00$, indicating that there were patterned relationships between the items. Both of these tests together suggest that it was appropriate to analyze the data using PCA.

The communalities of the misrepresentation variables are all above .6 (except for omission and accuracy in "about you" section, which were above .5) confirming that each item shares common variance with other items. As an indicator of the amount of variance explained by each component, an eigenvalue cut-off of 1 was first used. The initial eigenvalues showed that the first factor explained 55% of the variance, the second factor 12% of the variance, a third factor 7% of the variance, and a fourth factor 5% of the variance. The fourth factor was dropped from the analysis for a number of reasons. It accounted for a trivial amount of variance and did not emerge as a strong factor based on the analysis of the scree plot. Moreover, only the item of "Accuracy in the About You section" loaded on the fourth factor.

The data was reanalyzed forcing a three-factor solution. The three-factor solution explained a cumulative variance of 74.09%. (see Table 1)

Table 1

Factor loadings for Principal Component Analysis with Oblique direct oblimin rotation of Resume Accuracy measure (N = 200).

<i>Item</i>	<i>Fabrication</i>	<i>Omission</i>	<i>Accuracy</i>	<i>h²</i>
<i>Exaggerating About You</i>	.932	.012	.150	.879
<i>Exaggerating Education</i>	.927	-.045	.047	.773
<i>Inventing About You</i>	.883	.006	.090	.878
<i>Exaggerating Work Experience</i>	.823	.004	-.145	.867
<i>Inventing Education</i>	.784	.036	-.113	.760
<i>Exaggerating Training & Development</i>	.755	.013	-.195	.837
<i>Inventing Training & Development</i>	.691	.060	-.246	.829
<i>Inventing Work Experience</i>	.689	.096	-.238	.844
<i>Exaggerating Licences & Certificates</i>	.588	.234	-.184	.732
<i>Inventing Licences & Certificates</i>	.539	.241	-.257	.748
<i>Omitting Training & Development</i>	-.084	.908	-.079	.791
<i>Omitting Work Experience</i>	-.014	.813	-.127	.768
<i>Omitting About You</i>	-.069	.809	.012	.752
<i>Omitting Licences & Certificates</i>	.188	.776	.060	.766
<i>Omitting Education</i>	.243	.731	.191	.697
<i>Accuracy Licences & Certificates</i>	.098	-.115	.894	.774
<i>Accuracy Training & Development</i>	-.055	-.008	.882	.843
<i>Accuracy Work Experience</i>	-.058	-.039	.834	.786
<i>Accuracy Education</i>	-.157	.042	.745	.686
<i>Accuracy About You</i>	-.086	.081	.696	.882
<i>Eigenvalues</i>	<i>11.04</i>	<i>2.42</i>	<i>1.34</i>	
<i>% of Variance</i>	<i>55.23</i>	<i>12.12</i>	<i>6.69</i>	

Note: Oblique direct oblimin rotation, item loadings above .5 are in boldface. *h²* refers to item communality.

Principal components, item loadings and factor labels

Table 1 also shows the factor loadings after rotation. All variables were kept because none of the variables loaded highly onto more than one factor and all variables loaded onto one of the three factors. The 20 variables comprised a total of 3 components. An examination of the items suggests that these components can be labelled ‘Fabrications’, ‘Omissions’ and ‘Accuracy’ respectively. The Fabrications component was comprised of 10 items and included the exaggeration and invention items for each of the five sections (education, work experience,

training and development, licences and certificates, and about you). The second component, labelled Omissions, was comprised of five items. These items were the omission item for each of the five sections. Finally the five items that comprised the accuracy component included the accuracy item from each of the five sections.

Looking at Table 1 we can see the correlations between the variable and the component and can analyze how each item loads onto each component to confirm the data reduction decision. Communalities, which explain the proportion of each variable's variance that can be explained by the principal components, are also included in the table.

I had hypothesized that there would be three categories of misrepresentations: exaggerations, inventions and omissions. PCA indicated that there were only two categories of misrepresentations: fabrications (exaggerations and inventions grouped together) and omissions. Thus, only two scales were created, one representing fabrications, and the other omissions. Composite scores were created for each of the three factors, based on the mean of the items which had their primary loadings on each factor. Internal consistency for each of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were high: .96 for Fabrications (10 items), .89 for Omission (5 items) and .90 for Accuracy (5 items).

Acceptability of misrepresentation variables

Given the PCA suggested that exaggerations and inventions were one factor (called fabrications) and omissions another, I created two acceptance scales corresponding to these two factors. The items which make up these scales can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Items which comprise the scales of Acceptance of Misrepresentation

Acceptance of Fabrication Scale Items	Acceptance of Omission Scale Items
1. Exaggerating in the Education Section	1. Omitting in the Education Section
2. Inventing in the Education Section	2. Omitting in the Work Experience Section
3. Exaggerating in the Work Experience Section	3. Omitting in the Training and Development Section
4. Inventing in the Work Experience Section	4. Omitting in the Licenses and Certificates Section
5. Exaggerating in the Training and Development Section	5. Omitting in the About You Section
6. Inventing in the Training and Development Section	
7. Exaggerating in the Licenses and Certificates Section	
8. Inventing in the Licenses and Certificates Section	
9. Exaggerating in the About You Section	
10. Inventing in the About You Section	

Occurrence of misrepresentations

To see whether people were more accurate in some sections rather than others, a repeated measures analysis of variance was done on the five resume categories and showed a main effect for section, as shown in Table 3. Paired t-tests indicated no significant differences between highest and lowest reported fabrications and omissions. Overall accuracy was highest in About Yourself ($M = 5.39$, $SD=1.68$) and lowest in Training and Development ($M=5.18$, $SD = 2.05$), $t(198)=3.55$, $p= .00$.

Table 3

Means and standard deviations of factors of misrepresentation and composite scores of acceptance of misrepresentations (N = 200).

	<u>Misrepresentations</u> M(SD)			<u>Acceptance of Misrepresentations</u> M(SD)	
Resume Section	Fabrication	Omission	Accuracy	Fabrication	Omission
Education	2.43(2.07) ^a	2.16(1.54) ^b	5.53(1.85) ^d	2.25(1.47)	3.72(2.01)
Work Experience	2.53(2.10) ^a	2.52(1.78) ^b	5.34(1.96) ^e	2.62(1.67)	4.06(1.99)
Training & Development	2.57(2.14) ^a	2.19(1.66) ^b	5.18(2.05) ^d	2.61(1.67)	3.90(1.97)
Licence & Certificates	2.49(2.26) ^a	2.06(1.75) ^c	5.32(2.27) ^e	2.22(1.57)	3.64(2.06)
About You	2.26(1.99) ^a	2.40(1.74) ^c	5.59(1.77) ^d	3.17(1.84)	4.56(1.96)
Total Mean*	2.45(1.82)*	2.26(1.42)*	5.39(1.68)*	2.57(1.36)*	4.16(1.85)*

Note: Results based on a 7-point Likert scale, a higher number represents higher occurrence of Fabrication and Omission, as well as higher Accuracy. In terms of acceptability, the higher the number the greater the acceptance of misrepresentation.

*All misrepresentation and acceptability of misrepresentation component total means differ significantly at $p < .05$ level. Subscriptions are used to indicate which section means are significantly different.

Acceptability of misrepresentations

Tables 3 also shows the acceptability of misrepresentation means categorized by factors of fabrication and omission. Paired t-test analysis showed a significant difference between acceptance of fabrications (M=2.57, SD=1.36) and acceptance of omissions (M=4.16, SD=1.85), $t(198)=11.84$, $p = .00$. However, there were no significant differences between sections of acceptance of misrepresentations.

Correlations analysis

To examine the relationship between the degree of misrepresentation and acceptability of these misrepresentations, correlational analyses were conducted. The correlation between

fabrications and acceptability of fabrications was found to be statistically significant, $r = .39, p < .001$. The correlation between omissions and acceptability of omissions was also found to be statistically significant, $r = .24, p < .001$.

To examine the role of personality in resume misrepresentation, correlations were computed among the conscientiousness and honesty/humility scales, the three Misrepresentation scales (fabrications, omissions, accuracy) and the two composite acceptability of misrepresentation (acceptability of fabrication, acceptability of omission) scales. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 4.

Honesty/humility was significantly negatively correlated with fabrications $r = -.180, p = .01$, but not significantly correlated with omissions $r = -.121$, or accuracy $r = .052$. Honesty/humility was significantly negatively correlated with acceptance of fabrications $r = -.313, p < .001$, but not acceptance of omissions $r = -.055$.

Conscientiousness was negatively correlated with fabrications $r = -.177, p = .01$, and omissions $r = -.272, p < .001$, but it did not correlate significantly with accuracy $r = .066$. Conscientiousness was negatively correlated with acceptance of fabrications $r = -.340, p < .001$, but not with acceptance of omissions $r = -.018$.

Table 4

Correlations among HEXACO and Misrepresentation/Acceptance of Misrepresentation variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Honesty/Humility	.75										
2. Emotionality	.12	.70									
3. Extraversion	.00	-.29**	.79								
4. Agreeableness	.36**	-.11	.28**	.72							
5. Conscientiousness	.38**	-.05	.23**	.23**	.81						
6. Openness	.18*	-.07	.23**	.22**	.36**	.77					
7. Fabrications	-.18*	.03	-.03	-.09	-.18*	-.13	.96				
8. Omissions	-.12	.05	-.09	-.03	-.27**	-.08	.62**	.89			
9. Accuracy	.05	.00	.12	.14	.07	.17*	-.67**	-.33**	.90		
10. Acceptance of Fabrications	-.31**	-.03	-.08	-.06	-.34**	-.17*	.36**	.36**	-.14*	.95	
11. Acceptance of Omissions	-.06	-.06	-.19**	.03	-.02	-.06	.04	.24**	-.00	.46**	.94

*Note: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Scale reliability indicated in diagonal, (N=200).*

Post-hoc analyses

Post-hoc tests were conducted on the data and results are presented in Appendix G. Post-hoc tests revealed that responses to any of the measures did not differ as a result of gender and student-status (student/non student at time of participation) differences in the data. The only significant difference was found when looking at gender differences in how acceptable it was to fabricate, indicating that men, found it more acceptable ($M=2.78$, $SD= 1.41$) to fabricate than women ($M=2.28$, $SD= 2.55$), $t(198)=2.55$, $p= .011$. However, given the number of comparisons finding one comparison significant is not surprising and thus gender was not included as a factor in the main analyses). Analysis of variance indicated no statistically significant differences between employment groups (employed, self-employed, unpaid/unemployed) and the

components of misrepresentation and acceptance of misrepresentation. A correlational analysis indicated no significant correlations between age and any of the components or items of misrepresentation, suggesting that age did not play a role in influencing the extent to which participants misrepresented. Furthermore, job desirability did not significantly correlate with any analyzed variables, except for acceptance of fabrication, $r = -.16$, $p = .022$. Since this correlation is the only significant one out of many, as well as very small, job desirability is therefore considered to not play a role in influencing the data results. Participants provided an overall job desirability rating average of 5.38 (SD=1.82) on a 7-point scale with higher scores indicating greater desirability. The item “I would apply for this job if I were on the job market” was rated an average of 5.15 (SD=2.16) and “I would very much like to get this job” was given an average rating of 5.16 (SD=2.05). Overall, these ratings indicate that generally participants had an interest in the job advertisement which they were constructing a resume for.

Discussion

Knowing the potential negative consequences of detected resume fraud, I was interested in exploring factors that contribute to individuals engaging in resume misrepresentations. More specifically, the goal of this study was to explore the relationships between personality traits previously linked to deception (conscientiousness and honesty/humility), resume misrepresentations and acceptance of these misrepresentations. Since resume fraud is not well defined in the psychological literature, it was important to first categorize the different types of misrepresentations. Therefore, the results of this study also contribute to our understanding of the possible types of resume misrepresentations and the extent to which participants misrepresented. As I will outline below, my findings indicate interconnected relationships between acceptability of resume misrepresentations, actual resume misrepresentations, conscientiousness and honesty/humility.

Fabrications, omissions and accuracy

Consistent with previous literature on applicant faking (Koeppel, 2006; George et al., 2004; Guillory & Hancock, 2012), participants admitted to misrepresenting information on the resume they constructed. Although I hypothesized that there would be three categories of misrepresentations, my analysis revealed two categories of resume misrepresentations: fabrications (exaggerations and inventions) and omissions. What I didn't find was that participants could distinguish between inventions and exaggerations, suggesting that exaggerations and inventions are a part of the same construct. This can be explained by the idea that any deviation from completely factual information creates a distortion in the way applicants present themselves. Although in a different way, omitting relevant information on a resume also creates a distortion in the way an applicant is perceived by an evaluator, since individuals are

likely to omit negative information which may, if revealed to the evaluator, present a completely different perspective of the applicant.

Accuracy was a component of resume misrepresentation separate from both fabrications and omissions. My data indicates that accuracy was closely and negatively related to overall fabrications, and to omissions but less so. It is also possible that other forms of intentional misrepresentations were used by participants and impacted accuracy. For example, participants may have phrased information pertaining to previous work experience ambiguously or they may have described themselves with terms that could be interpreted subjectively, by means of using terms such as “hard worker” or “very social personality”. It is also possible that individuals may have unintentionally misrepresented themselves because they couldn’t recall the information accurately. However, it is important to consider that accuracy may or may not be a representation of intentional misrepresentation since it is mainly a summary of what the participant thinks of the information being factual and not necessarily how much they misrepresented.

Occurrence of misrepresentations

The data in my study supports the findings of Griffith and Peterson (2011) who found that omissive and active misrepresentations can be used simultaneously. When looking at the overall resume, Table 3 shows that individuals fabricated slightly less than they omitted. This is consistent with Donovan et al. (2003), who also found in their research that individuals misrepresented by omission the most and lied the least. There were no significant differences in fabrications between resume sections.

Acceptability of misrepresentations

When categorizing the acceptability of misrepresentations by items of exaggerations, inventions, omissions, individuals found it overall slightly more acceptable to exaggerate information than invent, whereas omissions were found to be the most acceptable form of misrepresentation on a resume.

However, our analysis revealed that exaggerations and inventions fall under one component of fabrications, revealing an inconsistency between how people perceive misrepresentations and how these misrepresentations actually relate to overall resume accuracy.

Correlations between acceptance and misrepresentations

The findings of previous literature, which showed that individuals who find deception acceptable are also more likely to use deception (Lippard, 1988; McLeod & Genereux, 2008), were consistent with our findings. As Hopper and Bell (1984) suggested, we assessed acceptability of misrepresentations specifically to type of misrepresentation (fabrication and omission), and found evidence that, as predicted, people were more likely to fabricate or omit information if they thought the behaviour was acceptable.

Personality

Like the work of McFarland and Ryan (2000), and McLeod and Genereux (2008), we found evidence that individual differences play a role in applicants' tendency to misrepresent information. Individuals who are more honest/humble or conscientious were less likely to fabricate information on their resume, or find this behaviour acceptable.

However, when it came to omissions, the data indicated a slightly different pattern of relationships. Although personality traits did not play a role in acceptance towards resume

omissions, conscientious individuals were the only ones to significantly omit less information, even if they believed that it was acceptable to do so.

Implications

From findings of this study we can see that acceptance of misrepresentations is one of the factors that determines whether an individual will misrepresent on their resume. It is also interesting that individuals who fabricated information were also more likely to omit information, showing a pattern of behaviour among individuals who misrepresented.

Personality is another factor that can predict who will misrepresent on a resume. Although individuals who are honest are less likely to fabricate information, it was conscientious individuals who were the least likely to misrepresent overall, whether it be in the form of fabrication or omission. This can be relatable to the finding that conscientiousness is a single best predictor of work performance (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996). Organizations may utilize this information by adding a test of conscientiousness to their battery of tests when screening applicants. Since conscientiousness is susceptible to faking, objective and indirect measures of conscientiousness may be useful.

Individuals perceived omission to be the most acceptable form of misrepresentation. Previous literature measuring the extent to which participants judged the acceptability of active lying (fabricating) and lying by omission revealed that individuals rated outright lying as worse than omitting (Haidt & Baron, 1996). However, there is evidence in our findings that both omissions and fabrications decrease the accuracy of a resume and create a distortion in information presented just as fabrications do.

Although accuracy was related to fabrications and omissions, it was not related to personality. If individuals gave lower ratings of accuracy due to lack of memory, it would make sense why personality did not relate to accuracy. More specific probes of misrepresentation ratings are suggested below.

Limitations and Future research suggestions

A suggestion for future research would be to explore the categorization of misrepresentations further to understand why the accuracy component did not correlate with either honesty or conscientiousness, although it is clear that there are connections between individual differences and fabrications and omissions, which relate to resume accuracy. One way to do so would be to be more specific when assessing when and how individuals misrepresent information on their resume. This could be done in a qualitative study, for example by pointing to specific sentences or bits of information participants provide in their resume, and asking about the extent of accuracy of each piece of information. This would also address the issues of potential misrepresentations by means of ambiguous statements, since this way participants can be directly asked about the intention of the information provided.

Griffith and Peterson (2011) suggested focusing on “how” and “why” participants misrepresent, and even though this study begins to explore the answers to these questions, much more research is needed using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection. Researchers interested in exploring this topic may find qualitative studies useful. Participants could be given a chance to explain how and why they may have misrepresented and researchers could probe further and receive answers which are richer in detail and description. Future studies may also include the role of risk-taking as one of the potential factors to influence decisions relating to resume misrepresentations.

Although the findings of this research have led to some interesting conclusions, this study is not without limitations. One shortcoming of this study is that it only looked at misrepresentations that were intentional. It is also possible that participants misrepresented themselves but they were unaware that they were in fact distorting the information. Another limitation is that participants may not have applied for a job for a long time and may not remember their information accurately. In future research, it might be prudent to ask respondents when they last updated their resume or looked at it. Common method variance may also be an issue since all information is collected using an online based survey method. Also, respondents may have different interpretations of the labels on the Likert scales which ask to rate the extent of misrepresentations, which would potentially create a measurement issue. To solve this, researchers may find it useful to rate misrepresentations in terms of percentage of accuracy, 100% being completely accurate and 0% being completely inaccurate. Furthermore, since being dishonest is considered to be a socially undesirable activity, although data was collected anonymously and for research purposes, it is possible that some participants may still not have fully admitted the extent to which they misrepresented. Since participants were aware that they were not applying for an actual job, it is possible that they may not have taken the task of resume construction as seriously as if they were applying for a real job. Furthermore, it may have been useful to include questions to test the knowledge of the content provided in the job description as a way to check that individuals actually read the job advertisement before proceeding to construct the resume. Another possible limitation is that participants were asked to provide acceptability of resume misrepresentation ratings right after they were asked to what extent they misrepresented. Since there was no time separation between the two tasks, participants may have filled out the acceptability measure by referring to their own misrepresentations.

Despite these limitations, this study is one of the first attempts in scientific research to categorize resume misrepresentations and connect them to individual differences. Based on our findings, it is evident that a relationship exists between individual differences, acceptance of resume misrepresentations and the extent to which individuals misrepresent information on their resume.

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Appendix A

Letter of Information

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Joan Finegan,
Associate Academic Dean, Social Science
Western University, Ontario

Student Investigator: Kateryna Synyak,
Industrial/Organizational Psychology

We would like to invite you to participate in a research study being conducted at the University of Western Ontario. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with information that will help you to make an informed decision regarding participation in this research. We are interested in looking at how people construct their resume. In particular, we are looking at the different approaches people take in deciding what information to include on a resume. If you agree to participate, you will first be asked some questions about yourself and then asked to indicate the degree to which various statements describe you. Next you will be provided with an advertisement for a job as a research analyst, and asked to construct a resume for this job. (Of course, there is no job, but we ask that you respond as if you were applying for the job.) You will then be asked some follow up questions about the resume you have just created. We will tell you more about what we are looking for at the conclusion of the study (since we would not want to influence your responses). We hope your answers will provide us with a deeper understanding of how resumes are created and used in applying for jobs.

It is anticipated that the entire task will take about an hour to complete. As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will be compensated \$3.00 your participation. To be able to participate, you must be over 18 years of age, currently reside in the United States or Canada and have experience applying for a job. It is also a requirement for you to have some type of post-secondary education. You are not eligible to participate in this study if you are under 18 or have no previous experience seeking an employment position or have no post-secondary education. There are no anticipated risks or discomforts associated with participating in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary and you may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions, or withdraw from the study at any time. However, you will only be compensated upon successful completion of the entire study. Therefore, if you don't complete the survey or you respond carelessly, you will not be compensated for your participation.

All data collected will remain confidential and accessible only to the investigators of this study. All responses will be anonymous and used for research purposes only. The data will be stored with all identifying or potential identifying information removed. If you require any further information regarding this research project or your participation in the study, you may contact the researcher.

Completion of this survey implies your voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Appendix B

Please read each statement carefully and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement.

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

- 1 _____ I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.
- 2 _____ I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.
- 3 _____ I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.
- 4 _____ I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.
- 5 _____ I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.
- 6 _____ I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.
- 7 _____ I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.
- 8 _____ I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.
- 9 _____ People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.
- 10 _____ I rarely express my opinions in group meetings.
- 11 _____ I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.
- 12 _____ If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
- 13 _____ I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.
- 14 _____ Select the "neutral" option.
- 15 _____ When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details.
- 16 _____ People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn.
- 17 _____ I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone.
- 18 _____ When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable.
- 19 _____ Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
- 20 _____ I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.
- 21 _____ I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought.
- 22 _____ People think of me as someone who has a quick temper.
- 23 _____ On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic.
- 24 _____ I feel like crying when I see other people crying.
- 25 _____ I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.

- 26 _____ If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.
- 27 _____ When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized.
- 28 _____ My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is “forgive and forget”.
- 29 _____ I feel that I am an unpopular person.
- 30 _____ When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful.
- 31 _____ Select the “strongly agree” option.
- 32 _____ If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.
- 33 _____ I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.
- 34 _____ I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by.
- 35 _____ I tend to be lenient in judging other people.
- 36 _____ In social situations, I'm usually the one who makes the first move.
- 37 _____ I worry a lot less than most people do.
- 38 _____ I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
- 39 _____ People have often told me that I have a good imagination.
- 40 _____ I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.
- 41 _____ I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.
- 42 _____ The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.
- 43 _____ I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else.
- 44 _____ I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
- 45 _____ I like people who have unconventional views.
- 46 _____ I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act.
- 47 _____ Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.
- 48 _____ Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am.
- 49 _____ I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time.
- 50 _____ I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.
- 51 _____ I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.
- 52 _____ Select the “disagree” option.
- 53 _____ People often call me a perfectionist.
- 54 _____ Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.
- 55 _____ I sometimes feel that I am a worthless person.
- 56 _____ Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking.
- 57 _____ I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.
- 58 _____ I find it boring to discuss philosophy.

- 59 _____ I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan.
- 60 _____ When people tell me that I'm wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them.
- 61 _____ When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group.
- 62 _____ I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental.
- 63 _____ I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.
- _____

Appendix C

Below is an advertisement for a job. Your task will be to construct a resume for this job so be sure to pay attention to skills and abilities asked for in the advertisement. (Of course, **this is not a real job advertisement and there is no job**) Do not worry about memorizing the details of this job posting as you will be able to refer to the ad.

Position: Research Analyst

Job description:

The Research Analyst is principally responsible for interpreting data, formulating reports and making recommendations based upon the research findings. The Research Analyst applies qualitative and quantitative techniques to analyze data and makes conclusions based on these analyses. Because Research Analysts must convey their findings to clients, they must possess strong communication and public speaking skills. This position requires a highly organized, motivated, and team-oriented individual who is able to operate under tight deadlines. The successful candidate will need to solve problems and implement solutions with speed and accuracy.

Responsibilities:

- Conduct in-depth data analyses using traditional and advanced methods for various research projects
- Formulate written analysis reports
- Develop and maintain strong business relationships with business partners and colleagues
- Prepare and manage presentations, generating Excel charts and PowerPoint presentations
- Coordinate research projects and be the main contact to internal and external stakeholders
- Provide education, training and sharing of information to colleagues

Requirements/Qualifications:

- Bachelors or advanced degree with some courses in research methods or statistics
- Expertise with MS Office, PowerPoint, Excel and SPSS/SAS
- Previous exposure to CAQDAS and ATLAS would be helpful
- Excellent organizational, time management and problem-solving skills
- Ability to work quickly, accurately and independently in a fast-paced environment
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team and establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with strong communication skills and ability to recall, retrieve and communicate detailed or technical information clearly, accurately and concisely and to non-technical audience/customers

Instructions:

Imagine you are applying for this job. Construct a resume using the categories provided. **Do not feel obligated to provide us with identifying information about where you worked and where you went to school.** You may simply describe the type of institution you have worked at without giving any identifying information (e.g., national banking institution, large research intensive university rather than their specific name).

Appendix D

In the following section of the survey, you will be asked some questions about your resume. Remember your answers will be used for research purposes only and are anonymous and confidential.

Consider the information you provided on the **Education** section:

(Education section they filled in presented here)

	Not at all (1)	To a very small extent (2)	To a small extent (3)	To a moderate extent (4)	To a fairly great extent (5)	To a great extent (6)	To a very great extent (7)
Did you exaggerate any of the information you provided?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you make up any of the information you provided?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did you omit any of the information you provided?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To what extent is the information you provided accurate ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix E

Rate the extent to which you believe the following behaviours are acceptable.

Overall Resume

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information on a resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information on a resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information on a resume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Education

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information in the Education section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information in the Education section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information in the Education section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Work Experience

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information in the Work Experience section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information in the Work Experience section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information in the Work Experience section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Training and Development

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information in the Training and Development section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information in the Training and Development section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information in the Training and Development section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Licenses and Certificates

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information in the Licenses and Certificates section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information in the Licenses and Certificates section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information in the Licenses and Certificates section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

About Yourself

	Totally unacceptable (1)	Unacceptable (2)	Slightly unacceptable (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightly acceptable (5)	Acceptable (6)	Perfectly Acceptable (7)
Exaggerating information in the About Yourself section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing inaccurate information in the About Yourself section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Omitting information in the About Yourself section	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix F

DEBRIEFING LETTER

Study Title: Exploring relationships between resume fraud and individual differences

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Joan Finegan,
Associate Academic Dean, Social Science
Western University, Ontario

Student Investigator: Kateryna Synyak, Industrial/Organizational Psychology

We greatly appreciate your participation in our study, and thank you for spending the time helping us with our research.

Purpose of the Study:

When you began the study, you were told that the purpose of this study was to investigate whether individuals with differing personality characteristics choose to include or omit different types of information when constructing a resume for a specific job position.

However, the study was more complicated than we explained at the beginning and would now like to elaborate on the goals and objectives of this research. We could not give participants complete information about the study before their involvement because it may have influenced participants' behaviour during the study in a way that would make investigations of the research questions invalid.

A resume describes an individual's academic and professional background and is a tool job seekers use when applying for employment positions. However, some individuals embellish or exaggerate the information on their resume to an extent that it is no longer an accurate representation of their experience, abilities, qualifications or characteristics. In this research study, we are interested in whether people's personality traits had an influence on the way they construct a resume when applying for a specific position. So in this study, the specific goal of our research is to investigate whether individuals who were higher or lower on certain personality traits were more likely to misrepresent information on their resumes through exaggeration, fabrication or omission of relevant information. We are also interested in looking at the different degrees of misrepresentations in the various components of a resume. In addition, we are also interested in investigating the extent that individuals find various/specific types of resume misrepresentations acceptable.

Confidentiality:

The information you provided in your responses will be kept completely confidential and anonymous. The data will be stored with all identifying or potentially identifying information removed. Please note that no one other than the researchers will have access to the data collected in this study.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, its purpose or procedures, or if any of the questions or exercises in this study caused you to feel uncomfortable, please feel free to contact the researcher.

Once again, thank you for your contribution to this research study. We really appreciate your participation, and hope that this has been an interesting experience for you.

Please click right arrow to receive your MTurk code.

Appendix G

Table A1

Means and standard deviations of items of misrepresentation and acceptance of misrepresentations (N = 200).

Resume section	<u>Misrepresentations</u> M(SD)		<u>Acceptance of Misrepresentations</u> M(SD)	
	Exaggerations	Inventions	Exaggerations	Inventions
Education	2.43(2.04)	2.43(2.09)	2.50(1.63)	1.99(1.30)
Work Experience	2.59(2.10)	2.47(2.09)	3.01(1.87)	2.22(1.46)
Training & Development	2.60(2.13)	2.53(2.15)	2.94(1.80)	2.27(1.53)
Licence & Certificates	2.50(2.22)	2.47(2.30)	2.41(1.68)	2.02(1.46)
About You	2.29(2.00)	2.22(1.96)	3.58(1.96)	2.75(1.71)
Total Mean	2.48(1.85)	2.43(1.86)	3.09(1.82)*	2.18(1.41)*

Note: A higher misrepresentation number represents higher occurrence of fabrication and omission. In terms of acceptance, the higher the number the greater the acceptance of misrepresentation.

*The difference between total acceptance of exaggerations and total acceptance of inventions is significant at $p < .05$ level. No significant difference between total exaggerations and total inventions.

Table A2

Gender differences between components of misrepresentation and items of misrepresentation (N = 200).

Variable	Males		Females		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Fabrication</i>	2.44	1.80	2.43	1.84	.05	.964
<i>Omission</i>	2.25	1.36	2.31	1.51	-.33	.740
<i>Accuracy</i>	5.48	1.70	5.27	1.70	.85	.397
<i>Acceptance of Fabrication</i>	2.78	1.41	2.28	1.27	2.55	.011
<i>Acceptance of Omission</i>	4.10	1.83	3.85	1.74	.95	.342
<i>Education Fabrication</i>	2.48	2.01	2.36	2.01	.42	.674
<i>Education Omission</i>	2.11	1.48	2.21	1.63	-.46	.644
<i>Education Accuracy</i>	5.60	1.89	5.44	1.79	.615	.539
<i>Work Experience Fabrication</i>	2.53	1.99	2.51	2.09	.07	.946
<i>Work Experience Omission</i>	2.57	1.75	2.46	1.84	0.42	.677
<i>Work Experience Accuracy</i>	5.49	1.91	5.14	2.01	1.25	.214
<i>T&D Fabrication</i>	2.48	2.02	2.68	2.20	-.065	.516
<i>T&D Omission</i>	2.12	1.61	2.29	1.72	-.70	.488
<i>T&D Accuracy</i>	5.33	1.98	4.99	2.14	1.16	.250
<i>L&C Fabrication</i>	2.45	2.13	2.54	2.28	-.23	.781
<i>L&C Omission</i>	2.25	1.36	2.31	1.51	-.61	.546
<i>L&C Accuracy</i>	5.32	2.33	5.35	2.20	-.09	.926
<i>About Yourself Fabrication</i>	2.28	1.90	2.22	1.87	.22	.825
<i>About Yourself Omission</i>	2.40	1.71	2.41	1.80	-.03	.974
<i>About Yourself Accuracy</i>	5.65	1.74	5.55	1.77	.37	.714

Table A3

Student status differences between components of misrepresentation and items of misrepresentation (N = 200).

<i>Variable</i>	Student		Non-Student		t-value	p-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
<i>Fabrication</i>	2.37	1.78	2.42	1.83	-.14	.893
<i>Omission</i>	2.50	1.55	2.20	1.42	1.00	.323
<i>Accuracy</i>	5.26	1.80	5.32	1.80	-.18	.857
<i>Acceptance of Fabrication</i>	2.60	1.25	2.48	1.45	.47	.642
<i>Acceptance of Omission</i>	3.84	1.55	3.86	1.97	-.05	.962
<i>Education Fabrication</i>	2.29	1.87	2.45	2.03	.613	.682
<i>Education Omission</i>	2.51	1.86	2.08	1.48	1.20	.239
<i>Education Accuracy</i>	5.31	1.76	5.54	1.94	-.65	.520
<i>Work Experience Fabrication</i>	2.52	1.84	2.52	2.06	-.00	.999
<i>Work Experience Omission</i>	2.66	1.78	2.45	1.80	.74	.466
<i>Work Experience Accuracy</i>	5.51	1.48	5.29	2.06	.74	.466
<i>T&D Fabrication</i>	2.62	2.02	2.56	2.11	.16	.874
<i>T&D Omission</i>	2.31	1.65	2.16	1.66	.46	.646
<i>T&D Accuracy</i>	5.35	1.74	5.10	2.16	.68	.501
<i>L&C Fabrication</i>	2.36	2.01	2.51	2.22	-.35	0.728
<i>L&C Omission</i>	2.14	1.77	2.03	1.76	.31	.756
<i>L&C Accuracy</i>	5.35	2.19	5.27	2.35	.17	.863
<i>About Yourself Fabrication</i>	2.07	1.75	2.29	1.90	-.611	.545
<i>About Yourself Omission</i>	2.90	1.99	2.30	1.69	1.52	.138
<i>About Yourself Accuracy</i>	5.48	1.81	5.56	1.84	-.22	0.824

Note: Status of student/non-student according to time of participation

Table A4

Analysis of variance results between employment status and components of misrepresentation (N = 200).

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Employed</i>		<i>Self-Employed</i>		<i>Unemployed</i>		<i>F-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>		
<i>Fabrication</i>	2.39	1.74	2.37	2.05	2.73	1.99	.393	.676
<i>Omission</i>	2.26	1.47	1.85	1.09	2.64	1.49	2.10	.125
<i>Accuracy</i>	5.38	1.77	5.12	1.96	5.32	1.94	.26	.770
<i>Acceptance of Omission</i>	2.54	1.50	2.29	1.06	2.60	1.26	.44	.646
<i>Acceptance of Fabrication</i>	3.87	1.98	4.20	1.73	3.54	1.55	.81	.447

**Note:* Separate items of misrepresentation all had insignificant differences at $p < .05$ level.

Table A5

Correlations between age and components of misrepresentation/items of misrepresentation
(N = 200).

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Pearson's r</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Fabrication</i>	.01	.624
<i>Omission</i>	-.07	.574
<i>Accuracy</i>	-.11	.416
<i>Acceptance of Fabrication</i>	-.16	.081
<i>Acceptance of Omission</i>	-.03	.994
<i>Education Fabrication</i>	.01	.867
<i>Education Omission</i>	.07	.538
<i>Education Accuracy</i>	-.07	.814
<i>Work Experience Fabrication</i>	.01	.928
<i>Work Experience Omission</i>	-.01	.929
<i>Work Experience Accuracy</i>	-.12	.307
<i>T&D Fabrication</i>	.02	.798
<i>T&D Omission</i>	-.07	.494
<i>T&D Accuracy</i>	.10	.456
<i>L&C Fabrication</i>	.00	.972
<i>L&C Omission</i>	-.09	.356
<i>L&C Accuracy</i>	-.05	.869
<i>About Yourself Fabrication</i>	.03	.696
<i>About Yourself Omission</i>	-.06	.618
<i>About Yourself Accuracy</i>	-.06	.867

Appendix H
Curriculum Vitae
Kateryna Synyak

EDUCATION

Wilfrid Laurier University
Honours Bachelor of Arts: Psychology - Research Specialist
October 2011

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Synyak, K & Jia, F. (May, 2012). *Bilingualism among adolescents: How motivation and social support play a role in literacy development*. Canadian Psychological Association Annual Conference, Vancouver, B.C.

Synyak, K., Tarraf, R., & Finegan, J. (2014, June). *The mediating effect of psychological empowerment on the relation between supervisor incivility and job satisfaction*. Canadian Psychological Association Annual Conference, Vancouver, B.C.

GRADUATE WORK EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant
Sept 2012 – May 2014
University of Western Ontario, London, ON

UNDERGRADUATE WORK EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant
Sept 2009- 2013
University of Western Ontario
University of Toronto